This listing of claims will replace all prior versions:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-23 (cancelled)

24. (new) A branched β-(1,3) glucan with β-(1,3)-bound side chains being attached by a β-(1,6)-linkage essentially free of β-(1,6)-linked chains having immunomodulatory effects.

25. (new) The glucan according to claim 24 prepared by contacting a branched β-(1,3)-glucan derived from yeast having β-(1.3)-linked side chains and β-(1,6) linked chains with a β-(1,6)-glucanase.

26. (new) The glucan according to claim 24 wherein it is further solubilized.

27. (new) The glucan according to claim 26 wherein the glucan is produced by contacting the unsolubilized glucan with a solubilization agent.

28. (new) The solubilized glucan according to claim 27 wherein said solubilization agent is formic acid.

29. (new) A branched β-(1,3) glucan with β-(1,3)-bound side chains being attached by a β-(1,6) linkage wherein the β-(1,6) linked chains do not contain more than four β-(1,6)-bound glucose units having immunomodulatory effects.

30. (new) The glucan according to claim 29 prepared by contacting a branched β-(1,3)-glucan derived from yeast having β-(1.3)-linked side chains and β-(1,6) linked chains with a β-(1,6)-glucanase.

31. (new) The glucan according to claim 29 wherein it is further solubilized

32. (new) The glucan according to claim 31 wherein the glucan is produced by contacting the unsolubilized glucan with a solubilization agent.

33. (new) The solubilized glucan according to claim 32 wherein said solubilization agent is formic acid.

34. (new) An immunomodulatory composition comprising a branched β-(1,3) glucan with β-(1,3)-bound side chains being attached by a β-(1,6)-linkage essentially free of β-(1,6)-linked chains.

35. (new) The glucan according to claim 34 prepared by contacting a branched β-(1,3)-glucan derived from yeast having β-(1,3)-linked side chains and β-(1,6) linked chains with a β-(1,6)-glucanase.

36. (new) The glucan according to claim 34 wherein it is further solubilized.

37. (new) The glucan according to claim 36 wherein the glucan is produced by contacting the unsolubilized glucan with a solubilization agent.

38. (new) The solubilized glucan according to claim 37 wherein said solubilization agent is formic acid.

39. (new) An immunomodulatory composition comprising a branched β-(1,3) glucan with β-(1,3)-bound side chains being attached by a β-(1,6) linkage wherein the β-(1,6) linked chains do not contain more than four β-(1,6)-bound glucose units.

40. (new) The glucan according to claim 39 prepared by contacting a branched β-(1,3)-glucan derived from yeast having β-(1.3)-linked side chains and β-(1,6) linked chains with a β-(1,6)-glucanase.

41. (new) The glucan according to claim 39 wherein it is further solubilized.

42. (new) The glucan according to claim 41 wherein the glucan is produced by contacting the unsolubilized glucan with a solubilization agent.

43. (new) The solubilized glucan according to claim 42 wherein said solubilization agent is formic acid.

44. (new) A method of increasing immunostimulation in fish or mammals by administering to the fish or mammals a glucan product comprising a branched β-(1,3) glucan with β-(1,3)-linked side chains being attached by a β-(1,6) linkage essentially free of β-(1,6)-linked chains.

45. (new) A method of increasing immunostimulation in fish or mammals by administering to the fish or mammal a glucan product comprising a branched β-(1,3) glucan with β-(1,3)-linked side chains being attached by β-(1,6)-linkage wherein the β-(1,6) linked chains do not contain more than four β-(1,6)-bound glucose units.

46. (new) A method of preparing an insoluble glucan having branched β-(1,3) side chains being attached by a β-(1,6) linkage essentially free of β-(1,6) linked chains comprising the steps of:

(a). contacting yeast cell walls with an aqueous alkaline solution under suitable conditions to effect the extraction of proteins and lipids therefrom;

(b). separating the resulting extracted yeast cell walls from said aqueous solution;

(c). washing the resulting separate yeast cells so as to further remove solubilized cell wall components therefrom;

(d). neutralizing the washed yeast cell walls; and

(e). pasteurizing the neutralized, washed cell walls and thereafter drying the resulting pasteurized neutralized, washed cell walls.

47. (new) A feed grade glucan prepared by the method according to claim 46.

48. (new) The method according to claim 46 wherein the glucan has β-(1,3) side chains being attached by β-(1,6) linkage wherein the β-(1,6) linked side chains do not contain more than four β-(1,6)-bound glucose units.

49. (new) A feed grade glucan prepared by the method according to claim 48.

50. (new) A solubilized branched β-(1,3)-glucan with β-(1,3)-bound side chains being attached by a β-(1,6)-linkage essentially free of β-(1,6)-linked chains containing more than four β-(1,6) bound glucose units, wherein said glucan is produced by contacting an unsolubilized glucan which is a branched β-(1,3)-glucan with β-(1,3)-bound side chains and which is attached via a β-(1,6)-binding and which is free of β-(1,6)-bound chains, with a solubilization agent .

51. (new) The solubilized glucan according to claim 50 wherein the solubilization agent is for formic acid.

52. (new) A chemical compound for use as a therapeutic agent wherein the compound is a branched β-(1,3) glucan with β-(1,3)-bound side chains being attached by a β-(1,6)-linkage essentially free of β-(1,6)-linked chains.

53. (new) The chemical compound according to claim 52 wherein the therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of food supplement, animal feed, and pharmaceutical product.

54. (new) The glucan according to claim 52 prepared by contacting a branched β-(1,3)-glucan derived from yeast having β-(1.3)-linked side chains and β-(1,6) linked chains with a β-(1,6)-glucanase.

55. (new) The glucan according to claim 52 wherein it is further solubilized.

56. (new) The glucan according to claim 55 wherein the glucan is produced by contacting the unsolubilized glucan with a solubilization agent.

57. (new) The solubilized glucan according to claim 56 wherein said solubilization agent is formic acid.

58. (new) A compound for use as a therapeutic agent wherein the compound is a branched β-(1,3) glucan with β-(1,3)-bound side chains being attached by a β-(1,6) linkage wherein the β-(1,6) linked chains do not contain more than four β-(1,6)-bound glucose units.

59. (new) The chemical compound according to claim 58 wherein the therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of food supplement, animal feed, and pharmaceutical product.

60. (new) The glucan according to claim 58 prepared by contacting a branched β-(1,3)-glucan derived from yeast having β-(1.3)-linked side chains and β-(1,6) linked chains with a β-(1,6)-glucanase.

61. (new) The glucan according to claim 58 wherein it is further solubilized.

62. (new) The glucan according to claim 61 wherein the glucan is produced by contacting the unsolubilized glucan with a solubilization agent.

63. (new) The solubilized glucan according to claim 62 wherein said solubilization agent is formic acid